THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

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WHEN FOUND——

WE reproduce as the frontispiece to the present number Clarkson Stanfield's drawing of the steamship *Britannia*, which took Dickens on his first visit to America, in January, 1842. The picture appeared as a frontispiece to the first cheap edition of *American Notes*, published in 1855. Dickens described the dimensions of the vessel and the life aboard in his inimitable, graphic, and humorous style in the pages of the book, and readers will probably turn to those passages in the volume with renewed interest to-day, and will readily realise the change that has taken place in respect of comfort and speed since then.

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In Forster's *Life* there is a very characteristic letter describing the voyage, and in another, referring to the lack of accommodation on board, addressed to Thomas Mitton, he said: "Anything so utterly and monstrously absurd as the size of our cabin, 'no gentleman of England who lives at home at ease' can for a moment imagine. Neither of the portmanteaus would go into it. There! The ladies' cabin is so close to ours that I could knock the door open without getting off something they call my bed, but which I believe to be a muffin beaten flat." It was this voyage which prompted that kindly humorist Tom Hood to compose the couple of witty verses which were reprinted in the February *Dickensian*.

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During the last few weeks several branches of the Fellowship have been added to the already long list. The Melbourne branch has grown with leaps and bounds, and the last mail brought news that its members numbered 350, bringing it third on the list in point of numbers. In connection with it another has been formed at Benalla, a country town near the city, and promises to be a very flourishing offshoot. In addition to these, a second branch has been formed in Canada, at Toronto, with Mr. E. S. Williamson, a well-known authority and lecturer on Dickens, as its secretary. Another at Kokomo (Indiana), whilst there are two new ones in New York. The one named after the city has been in course of formation by Mrs. W. E. Nye for some time, and is now in actual working order. The second is known as the Manhattan branch, and owes its existence to Mr. Chas. H. Govan. There is certainly room for two branches in New York. A branch is also being formed in Wellington, New Zealand, by Mr. Wilson, the librarian of the Parliament library there. In England others are being formed at Whitby and at Chesterfield. And thus the Fellowship is rapidly making a girdle round the world.

Joseph Jefferson, the great American actor who died last month, was chiefly known in this country as the creator of the part of Rip Van Winkle. Like most notable actors, he had a soft place in his heart for Dickens and his books, and played characters in dramatised versions of some of the novelist's works. His most successful were Caleb Plummer in *Dot* and Newman Noggs in *Nicholas Nickleby*. *Dot* was produced under the management of Dion Boucicault in America, and in it Mrs. John Wood played Tilly Slowboy in an inimitable manner. In his autobiography Jefferson gives interesting accounts of his performances in these parts, and also of his great contemporary W. E. Burton's creations of Captain Cuttle and Micawber.

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In his article on another page, Mr. Charles G. Harper, who is considered to be the greatest authority on the topography of our country, makes out his case for believing that Mrs. Lupin's hostelry the "Blue Dragon" was no other than the "Green Dragon" of Alderbury. Most other authorities consider the George Inn at Amesbury the one meant by Dickens. Mr. Snowden Ward has no doubt about it, whilst Mr. Kitton felt that the question had not been clearly settled. Perhaps, as Mr. Harper suggests, it may be a composite picture, as many literary landmarks are. At any rate, it is an interesting point.

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The celebration in Copenhagen last month of the centenary of the birth of the "Father of all Children," as Hans Christian Andersen was called, reminded us all again of the great friendship which existed between him and Charles Dickens. Andersen was one of the first visitors to Gadshill, and he went there at the special invitation of Dickens; and so overjoyed was he at the prospect of meeting the great author of *Nelly*, as he called *The Old Curiosity Shop*, that he positively refused to accept any other invitations. "My visit to England this time is only to Dickens," he said, and an invitation to see the Queen did not alter his resolve.

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Dickens had met him on a previous occasion at Lady Blessington's, where Andersen was staying, to whom he had written, "I must see Andersen." They became friends at once, and an interesting correspondence commenced between them. Andersen's stay at Gadshill increased his loving regard for the novelist, whom he found the most amiable of men, with "as much heart as intellect." In one of his letters home he spoke of him as "like the best characters in his books —jolly, lively, happy, and cordial." Of Mrs. Dickens he said she "is so gentle, so motherly, quite like Agnes in *David Copperfield*." He was deeply affected at leaving England, and seemed never to forget his visit to Dickens at Gadshill.

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The cover design of our present number is a reproduction of that used on the original monthly parts of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Last month's was that of *Nicholas Nickleby*.

THE EDITOR.

ON RE-READING "MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT."

By W. TEIGNMOUTH SHORE

AUTHOR OF "DICKENS" IN BELL'S MINIATURE SERIES OF GREAT WRITERS, ETC.

IT is one of the many delights of Dickens's novels that they can be read again and again, each time with the double pleasure of greeting old friends among the characters, and of discovering much in each book which has escaped notice before. That these two things are so is proof, if any were wanted, that Dickens is among the immortals, among those who have created works which are as varied, as full of matter for observation, and as ever fresh almost as the works of Nature herself.

It has always seemed to me one of the finest of the compliments paid to Dickens that Ruskin should have admitted him as one of the master-observers of nature, specifying as a particularly accurate example of his knowledge the description of the storm in *David Copperfield*. It is a not unusual habit to look upon Dickens as a great painter of London scenes, and to overlook the fact that he was as much at home among the highways and the byways of the countryside as amid the streets and lanes of the metropolis. In *Chuzzlewit* we have capital specimens of what he could achieve in the way of creating a town "atmosphere," but a recent re-reading of the story has strengthened the feeling which it always brought to me, that in it Dickens revelled in country sights and sounds, possibly in sheer joy at the contrast they showed compared with the States, from which he had returned with recollections more bitter than sweet.

In what is practically the first chapter, a country note is struck in the description of the "little Wiltshire village, within an easy journey of the fair old town of Salisbury." The setting sun bursts through the mists which have obscured it throughout the day; it is autumn; and in a couple of pages or so we are at once filled with the spirit of the season and made at home in the village where we are to pass so many pleasant hours. The effect wrought is produced by minute, happy touches, the outcome of long observation and of a natural gift of catching fast hold on the points important to be emphasised. The flood of evening sunshine, touching all it fell on with a "general gladness"; then "the light was all withdrawn; the shining church turned cold and dark; the stream forgot to smile; the birds were silent; and the gloom of winter dwelt on everything." Then comes the delightful picture of the forge, and the wind's frolic with the dead leaves.

Or turn to Tom Pinch's drive into Salisbury, when he met Mark Tapley and heard from him the momentous announcement that he was "going to leave the Dragon!" What an exhilarating description we are given of a "fresh, frosty morning, when hope runs cheerily through the veins with the brisk blood." Is there anywhere any more vivid picture of the countryside at such a time, when "from cottage chimneys smoke went streaming up high, high, as if the earth had lost his grossness, being so fair, and must not be oppressed by heavy vapour"? Or again, Martin's walk with Tom to that famous dinner at the famous Inn with John Westlock! "Look round and round upon this bare, bleak plain, and see even here, upon a winter's day, how beautiful the shadows are! Alas! it is the nature of their kind to be so. The loveliest things in

life, Tom, are but shadows; and they come and go, and change and fade away as rapidly as these!"—a faithful touch and a true simile.

But Dickens's eyes were clearly open to the dismal as well as the jolly side of the country, as is well shown by the depressing description of Martin's setting forth from Pecksniff's toward London through the rain; to read it, it makes one feel damp. Rain! "It streamed from every twig and bramble in the hedge, made little gullies in the path, ran down a hundred channels in the road, and punched innumerable holes in the face of every pond and gutter."

Of recent years the phrase, "word painting" has come into very general use, and is not inaptly descriptive of much of the writing of some modern novelists, who strive to make up for their lack of skill in drawing by over-lavish use of epithets. Very naturally, failure waits upon most of their attempts, and we readers find ourselves floundering, bewildered, in a sea of high-sounding adjectives, and overwhelmed at last by waves of gaudy sentences. It is not so with Dickens. His touch was sure and his knowledge profound. How lightly painted yet how effective this of an evening in the spring-time: "The day had been fine and warm; but at the coming on of night, the air grew cool, and in the mellowing distance smoke was rising gently from the cottage chimneys." It is full of suggestion; it stimulates our memories and our imaginations; it does not torture our attention with niggling details; the artist knows what to say and what to suggest, what to give and what to omit; the bungler tries to set everything before us and lands us in confusion.

There is something quaintly satirical in the description of Pecksniff, with "summer weather in his bosom," walking forth on a summer afternoon to pay his fulsome attentions to Mary, and this exquisite touch, "the colour of the long grass came and went, as if the light clouds made it timid as they floated through the distant air."

What a happy thing for us that Dickens lived before the railway had driven the coaches off the road! What would he have made of motor-cars, which are once again bringing prosperity to many an old Inn, where travellers were wont long years ago to refresh themselves, while horses were being changed? There are many stirring coach journeys in Dickens's novels, but none, to my mind, starts more joyously than that which Tom Pinch made from Salisbury to London town. What a driver! What a guard! What a coach! "It cared no more for Salisbury than if it had been a hamlet. It rattled noisily through the best streets, defied the cathedral, took the worst corners sharpest, went cutting in everywhere, making everything get out of its way; and spun along the open country road, blowing a lively defiance out of its key-bugle, as its last glad parting legacy." We can still hear the rattling of the merry wheels and the echoes of the horn as we read these lines, or, as remembering them, we tramp along the dusty roads, or career down and struggle up hill on our bicycles. But driving is not always pleasurable, much depending on companionship and weather, in neither of which was Mr. Tigg Montague fortunate when he sped down to Salisbury accompanied by Jonas and a thunderstorm. Such a storm, and such a picture of it! The writing is not lurid, but the effect is. We hear the crash of the thunder and see the vivid play of the lightning. Is not this well-nigh perfect: "The eye, partaking of the quickness of the

flashing light, saw in its every gleam a multitude of objects which it could not see at steady noon in fifty times that period. Bells in steeples, with the rope and wheel that moved them; ragged nests of birds in cornices and nooks; faces full of consternation in the tilted wagons that came tearing past—their frightened teams ringing out a warning which the thunder drowned; harrows and ploughs left out in the fields; miles upon miles of hedge-divided country, with the distant fringe of trees as obvious as the scarecrow in the beanfield close at hand,—in a trembling, vivid, flickering instant, everything was clear and plain." This is as faithful and clean-cut as a pre-Raphaelite picture, and more impressive.

There are many other striking passages worthy of quotation, more especially that in which is depicted the wood in which Jonas commits his useless murder, where the "vistas of silence" shuddered at the thud of his heavy stick.

It may be illusion, but there does certainly seem to me to be more of the countryside in *Chuzzlewit* than in any other of the novels, and something even of a country air is brought into the dim courts and dusty gardens of the Temple. Dickens was surely in a country mood when he penned these pages, which are, as a whole, so bright and wholesome, despite Pecksniff, Jonas, and Mrs. Gamp. Is it heretical to confess that to my mind, as the years go by, something of the grotesque humour of Mrs. Gamp is fading, and that the sinister side of the woman comes more to the fore? There is much that is really horrible in the drunken old harpy, who had no bowels of mercy, and who would have robbed a dying saint of his halo. On the other hand, Mark becomes more delightful every time we meet him; he shows no sign of aging or of altering in character, and it is a desperate temptation to make a pilgrimage to the "Dragon" in the hopes of finding a young and worthy descendant of Mark installed as mine host and ready to be "jolly" even under the depressing influence of a teetotal bench of magistrates. And to give vent to one more heresy, do not the American chapters make somewhat depressing reading? Even at the date when they were set down, they were a broad satire on the worst side of American life, and now that the satire has lost its sting it rings a little false, a trifle out of place in a novel, which otherwise is so close to reality. Indeed, we know that Dickens dragged the American trip in neck and crop, with an eye less to completing his work than to having another knock at those who were so angry at the rap he had already given them.

Through all and over all there is the portentous figure of Mr. Pecksniff, who to me has always been very real, but who, we are told by some critics, is a mere abstraction, a clothes-bag of typical bones, lacking flesh and blood. True it is that at the outset Dickens seems to have been hampered by his vision of a colossal exemplification of a hypocrite; the joints of his figure creak at first, but quickly they become loose and pliant, and Pecksniff grows into the arch-humbug, who deceives so many, himself included, for it is the essence of hypocrisy that the hypocrite is himself taken in. The villain who is conscious of his villainy is no hypocrite, but an actor who plays the part of a saint in order to disguise the sinner—a Joseph Surface, not a Pecksniff.

Is a query permitted? If so, what is the meaning of—"And, O ye Pharisees of the nineteen-hundredth year of Christian knowledge!" Is not nineteenth century intended?

The re-reading of any great work of imagination drives home to one the fact that reader as well as writer is influenced by the mood of the moment. Dickens knew exactly what he meant by every phrase and description as he wrote it; but not until he turns to his work in after years does a writer realise how much or how little of what he had in his mind's eye has he expressed upon paper. And we, the readers, how much or how little do we ever grasp of the master's meaning? How much or how little do we see of what was present to the master's vision? What we do see varies with the varying moods in which we read, and so we come to the point that it is infinitely difficult this art of literary criticism, a mingling of impressionism and of cultivated judgment, a weighing in scales which vary in their accuracy from day to day, and so we arrive at the further point that time is the truest test of all—in fact, the only final one. If a writer appeals to and touches generation after generation there is greatness in him. Who to-day can read *Chuzzlewit* without being hit hard by its power, pathos, satire, and fun?

THE MARK TAPLEY CLUB

IN June, 1903, a club was organised in Middlesbrough under the above title, with the object that "every member shall endeavour to come out strong on all occasions, and try to make other people 'jolly.'" The members further undertake "to seek to the best of their ability to follow the shining example of unfailing cheerfulness, which Dickens has given the character of Mark Tapley," and every member must have read *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

The club is composed entirely of ladies, and comprises over sixty living in far distant parts of the Empire. Meetings are held periodically to discuss the work of the club, and a manuscript magazine was begun in November last for the benefit of members unable to attend the meetings. The badge of membership is a silver initial and the motto of the club is based on a remark of Mark Tapley, and reads: "Virtue is its own reward; so's jollity."

A social evening is held each winter. At the last a series of *tableaux vivants* were presented from *Pickwick Papers*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Bleak House*. It is pleasing to learn that on the occasion all the members were jolly, and that the proceeds of the evening were given to the Crippled Flower Girls' Fund of Middlesbrough.

The club, however, lost a splendid opportunity of doing real and substantial credit to its name when it held its picnic indoors simply because of the rain. This surely would have been one of the chances Mark Tapley was waiting for "to come out strong under circumstances that would make other men miserable." In fact, it must have been an ideal day for the Mark Tapley Club's picnic.

The Honorary Secretary is Miss Amy Mahony, 9, Maple Street, Middlesbrough.

THE "BLUE DRAGON" OF "MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT."

By CHARLES G. HARPER
AUTHOR OF
"THE BRIGHTON ROAD," "THE INGOLDSBY COUNTRY," "THE HARDY COUNTRY," ETC.
ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

IN the third chapter of *Martin Chuzzlewit* we are particularly introduced to an inn, the subject of an earlier allusion in those pages, the "Blue Dragon," near Salisbury. In what direction it lay from that cathedral city we are not told, whether north, south, east, or west; and we only infer from incidents of the story in which the inn is brought into relation with the London mail and coaching in general, that the "Blue Dragon" was at Amesbury, eight miles to the north of Salisbury, by which route the famous "Quicksilver" Exeter mail to and from London went, in the old coaching days, avoiding Salisbury altogether. The course of the narrative, the situation of an old mansion on the Wilsford road near Amesbury, generally pointed out as Pecksniff's

THE "GREEN DRAGON," ALDERBURY

home, and the position of Amesbury, all seem at the first blush to point to that fine old inn, the "George" at Amesbury, being the original of the "Blue Dragon"; and this old inn certainly was not only a coaching-house, but was what another claimant to the honour of being the real true original of the "Blue Dragon"—the "Green Dragon" at Alderbury—could never have been, a hostelry with accommodation sufficient for postchaise travellers such as old Martin Chuzzlewit and Mary.

The "George" at Amesbury is a house of considerable size and architectural character, and its beauties might fitly have employed the pencils of Pecksniff's pupils had that great and good man condescended to notice anything less stupendous than cathedrals, castles, and Houses of Parliament. As it was, however, the architectural studies of his young friends were made to contemplate nothing meaner than "elevations of Salisbury Cathedral from every possible point of sight," and lesser things were passed contemptuously by (chap. i.).

The "George," after the fine old church—that church in which Tom Pinch played the organ—is the chief ornament of Amesbury, and that it was the house meant by Dickens when he wrote *Martin Chuzzlewit* is in the village an article of faith which no visitor dare controvert or dispute in any way on the spot. Like the small boys who do not say "Yah!" and are not courageous enough to make grimaces until safely out of arm's reach, we only dare dispassionately discuss the *pros* and *cons* when out of the place. It were not possible on the spot to object, "Yes, but," and then proceed to argue the point with the landlord, who confidently shows you old Martin Chuzzlewit's bedroom and a room with a descent of one step inside, instead of the

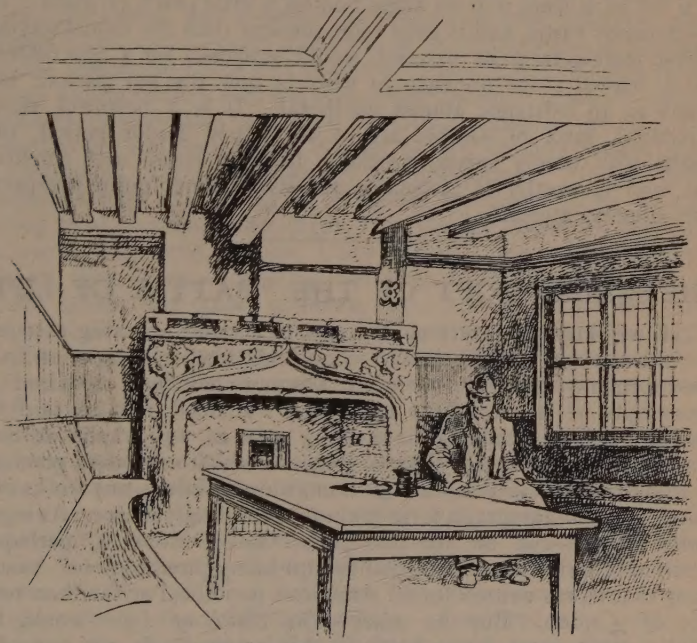
THE GEORGE INN, AMESBURY

"two steps on the inside so exquisitely unexpected that strangers, despite the most elaborate cautioning, usually dived in, head first, as into a plunging-bath."

But the truth is, like many another literary landmark, the "Blue Dragon" in *Martin Chuzzlewit* is a composite picture, combining the features of both the "George" at Amesbury, eight miles to the north of Salisbury, and those of the "Green Dragon" at Alderbury, three miles to the south. Nay, there were not so long ago at Alderbury those who remembered the picture-sign of the "Green Dragon" there, which doubtless Dickens saw in his wanderings around the neighbourhood. "A faded and an ancient dragon he was; and many a wintry storm of rain, snow, sleet, and hail had changed his colour from a gaudy blue to a faint lack-lustre shade of grey. But there he hung;

rearing in a state of monstrous imbecility on his hind legs; waxing with every month that passed so much more dim and shapeless that as you gazed at him on one side of the sign-board it seemed as if he must be gradually melting through it and coming out upon the other" (chap. iii.).

The sign has long since been replaced by the commonplace lettering of the present day, but it was then, in Dickens's own words, "a certain Dragon who swung and creaked complainingly before the village ale-house door," a phrase which at once shows us that if by the "Blue Dragon" of the story the "George" at Amesbury was intended to be described, it was a derogatory description of that fine old hostelry.



INTERIOR OF THE "GREEN DRAGON," ALDERBURY

This brings us to the chief point upon which the validity of this claim of the "Green Dragon" at Alderbury must rest. Dickens distinctly alludes to the "Blue Dragon" as a "village ale-house," and such it is and has ever been; while to the "George" at Amesbury that description cannot even now justly apply, and certainly it could never in coaching times, when in the heyday of its prosperity, have been so fobbed off with such a phrase. Moreover, we will do well to bear in mind that old Chuzzlewit and his companion did not put up at the inn—this "village ale-house"—from choice. The gentleman was "taken ill upon the road," and had to seek the first house that offered.

Those curious in the byways of Dickens topography will find Alderbury three miles from Salisbury on the left-hand side of the Southampton road. Half a mile from it on the other side of the way

stands "St. Mary's Grange," a red-brick building in a mixed Georgian and Gothic style, built by Pugin, and locally reputed to be the original of Mr. Pecksniff's residence: a circumstance which may well give us pause and opportunity for considering whether Dickens had that distinguished architect in his mind when creating the character of his holy humbug.

The "Green Dragon," which we have thus shown to have at least as good a title as the "George" at Amesbury to be considered the original of the house kept by the genial Mrs. Lupin, friend of Tom Pinch, Mark Tapley, and Martin Chuzzlewit in particular, and of her fellow-creatures in general, does not directly face the highway, but is set back from it at an angle behind a little patch of grass. It is pre-eminently rustic, and is even more ancient than the casual wayfarer, judging merely from its exterior, would suppose; for a fine fifteenth-century carved stone fireplace in what is now the bar parlour bears witness to an existence almost mediæval. It is a beautiful, though dilapidated, work of Gothic art of the Early Tudor period, ornamented with boldly carved crockets, heraldic roses, and shields of arms, and is worthy of inspection for itself alone, quite irrespective of its literary interest.

THE MANUSCRIPT OF THE "BATTLE OF LIFE"

THE well-known anxiety of America to acquire anything associated with the magic of Dickens's name finds further illustration in the announcement that Mr. Pierpont Morgan has just acquired two manuscripts in the novelist's autograph. It need not be said that, apart from the exceedingly interesting case of autographs at South Kensington known as the Forster Bequest, which comprises practically the whole of the manuscripts of Dickens's longer books, any works of his in their original autograph form are now exceedingly scarce. As regards *Hunted Down*—one of Mr. Morgan's "lots"—there is, perhaps, a certain appropriateness in the manuscript being purchased for America, seeing that it was written for an American periodical at the then record price of £1,000. But the other—*The Battle of Life*—would have found a much more fitting home in this country. It was one of the novelist's Christmas books, although less known than several of his similar efforts. But we must watch the departure across the Atlantic of many literary treasures which we should like to keep with the best grace we can. The vigilance of the American collector is untiring, and when to this is added a very long purse, what wonder is it that he is so successful?

BRANSBY WILLIAMS POST CARDS

ADMIRERS of Mr. Bransby Williams's genius in portraying characters from the works of Dickens should possess themselves of the new series of post cards, picturing twelve of his most notable impersonations, which the Rapid Photo' Printing Co., of Bridgewater Square, E.C., have just issued. They are lifelike studies and excellently produced.

DICKENSIAN HUMBUGS

By WOODFORD SOWRAY

I. IN GENERAL

IN all the wonderful gallery of character bequeathed to the world by the master for all time, none is more varied and complete, more true to Nature and to poor humanity, than the remarkable series of humbugs and hypocrites which point the moral and, in a literary sense, adorn the tale in nearly all his works. Next to Charles Dickens's love and tenderness for children and his intense sympathy for the poor and destitute, there is nothing more convincing to his readers than his intense hatred and exposure of shams—shams religious, shams political, shams social—every shade and grade of dissimulating humanity, from the pharisaical whine and snuffle of the red-nosed Stiggins, painted in crude strong colours with the ardent detestation of youth for religious pretenders, down to the bombastic platform twaddle of the Rev. Luke Honeythunder and the inflated conceit of Mr. Thomas Sapsea, Mayor of Cloisterham, "the biggest donkey in Christendom." What a gallery of portraits they are!—Stiggins, Squeers, Mantalini, Jingle (a merry humbug this), Pecksniff, Montague Tigg, Carker (hypocrite and villain combined), Chadband, Vholes, Uriah Heep, Littimer, Pumblechook, Podsnap, Silas Wegg, Veneering, the Rev. Luke Honeythunder, Mr. Thomas Sapsea, and others of minor note; also of the fair sex, Sairey Gamp and Betsey Prig—humbugs or hypocrites of varying degrees, with divers methods and with divers objects. The feminine hypocrites are few; next to the nurses, perhaps the nearest approach to one is found in the amiable Miss Miggs, but there is neither subtlety nor consistency in her pretences—her shrewish temper and desire to make everybody uncomfortable are always uppermost. There is no oily deceit, she is all gall and vinegar. Again, there is Rosa Dartle; but here we see a woman of fierce passion and revengeful spirit, who cannot conceal her bitter animosity to Little Em'ly. So with others. We see Fanny Squeers, whose charms have made no impression on Nicholas Nickleby, showing her claws and petty feline spite, as might be expected in such sordid surroundings. But there is no mask; not even when she writes that delightful letter to his uncle Ralph, telling how the monster attacked her "poor Pa," and "one of the forms is steepled with his Goar." Why so few feminine hypocrites are limned by the master may be an interesting subject for discussion at Fellowship gatherings.

With this digression let us revert to the contemplation of the hypocrites Dickens drew of the sterner sex. But before I notice them individually, I should like first to place before you a few views from the master's pen of humbug and inconsistency in the mass, in systems, laws, and customs. Nothing in individual portraiture better shows how he abhorred shams and pretences than some of these passages. Remember that Dickens, in his struggle upwards from the blacking factory, with a keen relish for social recreation in his leisure, and his wonderful powers of observation, came into contact with all sorts and conditions of men. To bitter personal experience of unjust and

unequal laws, and to study of human character, its weaknesses, its foibles and conceits, he was presently able to add the valuable experience of studying the elect of the nation—the House of Commons. Here was a field of study indeed—and that he was a diligent student of our legislators of that day none who have read his works can doubt. No sooner had he well gained the public ear than he showed this eager desire to battle with shams. He has not got very far with *Pickwick* (which, recollect, was started as a humorous work depicting the adventures of cockney sportsmen), when he carries Pickwick, Winkle and Co. down to the scenes of his happy boyhood in the Medway valley. They meet jolly old Wardle, and go to Dingley Dell and witness the memorable match of Dingley Dell *v.* All Muggleton. *Muggleton!* an old-fashioned county town. "Ah! here's a chance," thinks the genial but earnest Boz, "to set my readers thinking as well as laughing!" And then, in a few caustic sentences, he describes Muggleton, "the ancient and loyal borough, mingling a zealous advocacy of Christian principles with a devoted attachment to commercial rights, presenting no fewer than 1,420 petitions against the continuance of negro slavery abroad, and an equal number against any interference with the factory system at home; sixty-eight in favour of the sale of livings in the Church, and eighty-six for abolishing Sunday trading in the street."

This is a picture of political humbug in the mass, and it was hardly overdrawn. Again, read the chapter describing the Eatanswill election, with the Hon. Samuel Slumkey shaking hands with the "twenty washed men," and kissing the six children-in-arms. The whole description of the Eatanswill election, told with delightful humour, is a sincere exposition of the humbug, the sham, the corruption of elections to Parliament in the olden days. Later in *Pickwick* he satirises the great and bumptious "unpaid" in Mr. Nupkins, exposes legal humbug by means of Dodson and Fogg and Serjeant Buzfuz, and strikes the first blow for the abolition of the Fleet Prison.

Dickens evidently had a poor opinion of the utility of the Houses of Parliament in his younger days. He is constantly referring to the neglect of the people by their hereditary and elected governors. The squabbles of parties, the wire-pulling, the waste of time in bombastic and inflated oratory, while numberless bad old laws needed reform or wiping out, and social reforms were sorely needed but persistently neglected, whilst Blues came in and Buffs went out—plenty of talk, floods of oratory, little attempted, nothing done. Sometimes he poked fun at pompous, pretentious legislators with genial or whimsical humour; sometimes, stirred by the scenes of misery and neglected child-life he depicted in his tales, he was roused to scathing denunciation of the humbug of such government.

In *Bleak House* he gives us some delightfully humorous passages on the humbug of party government. Turn to Chapter XII., describing the "brilliant and distinguished circle" at Sir Leicester Dedlock's place, Chesney Wold. Among the "brilliant" company there is—

"My Lord Boodle, of considerable reputation with his party, who has known what office is, and who tells Sir Leicester Dedlock, with much gravity after dinner, that he really does not see to what the

present age is tending. . . . He perceives with astonishment, that supposing the present Government to be overthrown, the limited choice of the Crown, in the formation of a new ministry, would lie between Lord Coodle and Sir Thomas Doodle—supposing it to be impossible for the Duke of Foodle to act with Goodle, which may be assumed to be the case in consequence of the breach arising out of that affair with Hoodle. Then giving the Home Department and the Leadership of the House of Commons to Joodle, the Exchequer to Koodle, the Colonies to Loodle, and the Foreign Office to Moodle, what are you to do with Noodle? You can't offer him the Presidency of the Council; that is reserved for Poodle. You can't put him in the Woods and Forests; that is hardly good enough for Quoodle. What follows? That the country is shipwrecked, lost, and gone to pieces (as is made manifest to the patriotism of Sir Leicester Dedlock) because you can't provide for Noodle!

"On the other hand, the Right Honourable William Buffy, M.P., contends across the table with some one else, that the shipwreck of the country—about which there can be no doubt—is attributable to Cuffy. If you had done with Cuffy what you ought to have done when he first came into Parliament, and had prevented him from going over to Duffy, you would have got him into alliance with Fuffy, you would have had with you the weight attaching as a smart debater to Guffy, you would have brought to bear upon the elections the wealth of Huffy, you would have got in for three counties Juffy, Kuffy, and Luffy, and you would have strengthened your administration by the official knowledge and the business habits of Muffy. All this, instead of being, as you now are, dependent on the mere caprice of Puffy!

". . . It is perfectly clear to the brilliant and distinguished circle, all round, that nobody is in question but Boodle and his retinue, and Buffy and *his* retinue. These are the great actors for whom the stage is reserved. A people there are, no doubt—a certain large number of supernumeraries, who are to be occasionally addressed, and relied upon for shouts and choruses, as on the theatrical stage; but Boodle and Buffy, their followers and families, their heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, are the born first-actors, managers, and leaders, and no others can appear upon the scene for ever and ever."

Going on to Chapter XL. of the same work, entitled, "National and Domestic," we find another passage in scathing contempt of this continual intrigue and manœuvre for place and power, pursued by the ruling cliques of that time, this political game of battledoor with the national welfare for shuttlecock. "England," says the author, "has been in a dreadful state for some weeks. Lord Coodle would go out, Sir Thomas Doodle wouldn't come in, and there being nobody in Great Britain (to speak of) except Coodle and Doodle, there has been no Government."

But at last Sir Thomas Doodle consents to "come in," and does "so handsomely, bringing in with him all his nephews, all his cousins, and all his brothers-in-law. So there is hope for the old ship yet."

Students of the master must continually realise how fully he utilised his life experiences from childhood upwards, however brief or casual, in depicting bad conditions and exposing shams and wrongs as well as in

the mere delineation of character. *Bleak House* offers some of the best instances of this. The views of political life which I have quoted were doubtless formed from what he saw and heard in the Reporters' Gallery, compared with everyday life and the crying necessity for reform in all directions. The woes of the poor crossing-sweeper, the squalor and misery of Tom-all-Alone's and its surroundings, and the wide gulf between these and the empty orations of the well-fed Chadband, were as surely suggested by memories of his most unhappy life in the Hungerford blacking factory. But there was another crying evil, another national scandal which he was determined to attack, and that was the Court of Chancery as then constituted, and the woful condition of legal procedure generally. As shown to the world by means of the famous suit of Jarndyce *v.* Jarndyce, which is the great feature of the book, this ancient institution for guarding right and preventing injustice was a gigantic humbug. We cannot doubt that Dickens was largely moved to attack this colossal imposition, and to throw a vivid light on the widespread misery and poverty resulting (whilst lawyers, glib and smug, of all grades battened and waxed fat at the expense of beggared suitors), by the experience of legal life he gained, short as it was, in his early youth. Read, again, the first chapter of *Bleak House* describing the famous case (bearing in mind that, as the Preface states, "everything set forth in these pages concerning the Court of Chancery is substantially true and within the truth"); read the descriptions of poor little Miss Flite and "the man from Shropshire" and their experience of the Courts of Chancery; then, by way of contrast, study Mr. Conversation Kenge; also that other legal harpy, Mr. Vholes, as depicted in Chapter XXXIX., "Attorney and Client," and finally the ending of the great case, the "monument of Chancery practice," as Kenge puts it, on which Patience has sat a long time (as Allan Woodcourt remarks). Read these, and you will say that here Dickens attacked perhaps the greatest sham of his time—the legal sham—and struck the first blow for one of the greatest reforms of the century.

Once more, we have the scathing denunciation of the ways and methods of Government illustrated forcibly in *Little Dorrit*. Here, again, depicting a Government Department which he happily calls the Circumlocution Office, he forcibly and without exaggeration shows us the machinery of Government in a state of hopeless helplessness, incompetent officials bound hand and foot by musty precedents, ancient routine, and dignified but useless formalities, familiar to us all to this day under the term of *red tape*. All Dickensians know well the famous chapter, "How not to do it," in which the master gave us so effective a picture of these evils, and the manners of the well-paid irresponsibles who did not do it, and could not do it, and probably did not know what had to be done. These, under the name of the "Tite Barnacles," have been pictured for us for all time. It is true that in fifty years since *Little Dorrit* was written much improvement has been effected in the Civil Service, the greatest reform being the introduction, in 1870, of open competition for posts of every grade in the Government service (except in the Foreign Office), from boy sorters in the Post Office to superior clerkships at the Treasury. While, however, it is an

ever-recurring complaint that red-tape methods and circumlocution still flourish in many Government Departments, I am decidedly of opinion that these are sometimes actually created or increased by Parliament itself. In other cases these evils are due to shrewd officials seeking to "magnify their department" with a view to their own betterment, and "thereout suck they no small advantage." On the whole, we recognise that in the service of the Crown, as in Parliament itself, and, as in legal matters, Chancery procedure, the fitness of magistrates, imprisonment for debt, workhouses, poor law, hospital nurses, the administration of charities, factory legislation, education and social conditions generally, in which sham, humbug, imposition—moral fraud—flourished unchecked, the magic pen of Charles Dickens was the source and inspiration of much of the good that has since been achieved, and of the efforts that are yet being made for the betterment of our race and nation. I confess that in my younger days I have, on reading passages from the works such as those quoted, felt that we all, Government and people, are the most stupendous humbugs as a nation that a far-seeing Providence has ever made powerful and great; but again I reflect that, as Dickens once said, we are all merely human. Reading the works now, we can realise how much has been done since they were written; also that the social reformer has, and always will have, an uphill battle to fight. He will always encounter Hypocrisy, Self-Interest, Ignorance, and Prejudice, Calumny, Jealousy, and Intrigue, with Corruption (of sorts) striving to outflank him on either hand, and Sloth and "Don't Care" as dangerous as any, hanging in the rear. Charles Dickens encountered all these, and triumphed over them, and the good work he did for the people will carry his name down through the ages to countless millions with grateful, well-earned benedictions.

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

V

GENIUS and its rewards are briefly told:
A liberal nature and a niggard doom,
A difficult journey to a splendid tomb.
New writ, nor lightly weighed, that story old
In gentle Goldsmith's life I here unfold;
Thro' other than lone wild or desert gloom,
In its mere joy and pain, its blight and bloom,
Adventurous. Come with me and behold,
O friend with heart as gentle for distress,
As resolute with fine wise thoughts to bind
The happiest to the unhappiest of our kind,
That there is fiercer crowded misery
In garret toil and London loneliness
Than in cruel islands mid the far-off sea.

March, 1848. JOHN FORSTER.

Dedication to his "Life of Oliver Goldsmith."

FORSTER'S HOUSE AND ITS THREATENED DEMOLITION

THE demolitions on the west side of Lincoln's Inn Fields have turned the attention of the curious in these matters to a house of the greatest literary and historic interest. We refer, of course, to the house John Forster occupied in the thirties, forties, and fifties. He moved into his chambers there when he was twenty-two years of age, and just before he published his *Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth*. Sir Leslie Stephen and others have improved our notions of biography since Forster's day, but no one has made the art more popular. He was living there when he flirted with the sentimental "L. E. L.," when he was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple, and when he succeeded Dickens as editor of the *Daily News*. It was there that he laid the foundation of his library of eighteen thousand volumes and his collection of pictures, both of which he bequeathed to the nation; and it was there also that he first earned fame as the "harbitrary gent" he undoubtedly was. What is more interesting still, it was in this house that he used to entertain the novelist on some of his visits to town after Dickens had shaken its dust from his feet; and "Boz" has left us in his letters a pleasant glimpse of his running up to town from Broadstairs to dine at friend Forster's, and read to an admiring circle of cronies the manuscript of a certain immortal story called *The Chimes*.

The house is pretty grimy now. It has a dash of portentous picturesqueness as you approach it through the public gardens in front, and though it is topped by an ugly telephone staff and the roof of a big electric generating station at the back, it retains something of the old stateliness that made it a fitting home for a burly biographer. There are two houses, with a joint porch, and Forster's was the one on the right. A ritualist, looking at the six tall pilasters up the front might compare them to the six candles on the high altar of some dim old Roman cathedral; but there all church comparisons would end. The place has not improved since it became the lair of lawyers and accountants, and the "fore-shortened allegory" that used to adorn the first-floor ceiling has been hacked about and smudged over with lime. It was in this room, to quote "Boz" himself, that you might once hear "a sound at night, as of men laughing, together with a clinking of knives and forks and wineglasses." Dickens also made the house serve for old Tulkinghorn's chambers, and it suits the character nowadays more than ever, for it has the loftiness of Dombey senior and the grimness of that unsavoury prototype of Bunthorne, Arthur Gride. There is a good photograph of the premises in the late F. G. Kitton's book on *The Dickens Country*, and brief as that book is in detail, it is likely long to hold a place as the best guide to those parts of town that the novelist touched. Fortunately, the scheme of alterations for the new thoroughfare of Kingsway and its tributaries does not touch John Forster's house, so the famous landmark seems pretty safe for some years yet.—*The Pall Mall Gazette*.

CALENDAR OF DICKENS QUOTATIONS

COMPILED BY "OLD FLEET"

May 1.—"Spring has many beauties, and May is a fresh and blooming month."—*Pickwick Papers.*

May 2.—"No man who can read ever looks at a book, even unopened on a shelf, like one who cannot."—*Our Mutual Friend.*

May 3.—"It is to little familiar things, suggestive of the voice, look, manner, never more to be encountered on this earth, that the mind first turns in a bereavement."—*In Memoriam—W. M. Thackeray.*

May 4.—"What on earth is the use of giving a man coals who has nothing to cook, or giving him blankets when he hasn't a bed, or giving him soup when he requires substantial food?"—*Sketches by Boz.*

May 5.—"Among men who have any sound and sterling qualities there is nothing so contagious as pure openness of heart."—*Nicholas Nickleby.*

May 6.—"Painters always make ladies out prettier than they are, or they wouldn't get any custom."—*Oliver Twist*—Mr. Bedwin.

May 7.—"A man who has any good reason to believe in himself never flourishes himself before the faces of other people in order that they may believe in him."—*David Copperfield.*

May 8.—"When a man says he's willin', it's as much as to say that man's a waitin' for a answer."—*David Copperfield*—Mr. Barkis.

May 9.—"I think it must be somewhere written that the virtues of the mothers shall, occasionally, be visited on the children, as well as the sins of the fathers."—*Bleak House*—Mr. Jarndyce.

May 10.—"It will be generally found that those who sneer habitually at human nature, and affect to despise it, are among its worst and least pleasant samples."—*Nicholas Nickleby.*

May 11.—"My experience teaches me that most of the people I know would do far better to leave marriage alone. It is at the bottom of three-fourths of their troubles."—*Bleak House*—Mr. Tulkinghorn.

May 12.—It is strange to watch the faces of the blind, and see how free they are from all concealment of what is passing in their thoughts; observing which, a man with eyes may blush to contemplate the mask he wears."—*American Notes.*

May 13.—"You women are so kind, and in your kindness have such wise perception; you know so well how to be affectionate and full of solicitude without appearing to be; your gentleness of feeling is like your touch—so light and easy that the one enables you to deal with wounds of the mind as tenderly as the other enables you to deal with wounds of the body."—*Martin Chuzzlewit*—Tom Pinch.

May 14.—"The changes of a fevered room are slow and fluctuating, but the changes of the fevered world are rapid and irrevocable."—*Little Dorrit.*

May 15.—"Half the misery and hypocrisy of the Christian world arises (as I take it) from a stubborn determination to refuse the New Testament as a sufficient guide in itself, and to force the Old Testament into alliance with it, whereof come all manner of camel-swallowing and of gnat-straining."—Letter to Mr. Frank Stone.

May 16.—"In the majority of cases conscience is an elastic and very flexible article, which will bear a deal of stretching, and adapt itself to a great variety of circumstances."—*Old Curiosity Shop.*

May 17.—"What a blessed thing it is—living in a wale—to be contented!"—*Martin Chuzzlewit*—Mrs. Gamp.

May 18.—"Breakings-up are capital things in our schooldays, but in after life they are painful enough."—*Pickwick Papers.*

May 19.—"Go in and win—an admirable thing to recommend, if you only know how to do it."—*Pickwick Papers.*

May 20.—"Take nothing on its looks; take everything on evidence. There's no better rule."—*Great Expectations*—Mr. Jaggers.

May 21.—"The affections may not be so easily wounded as the passions, but their hurts are deeper, and more lasting."—*Barnaby Rudge.*

May 22.—"Mature affection, homage, devotion, does not easily express itself. Its voice is low. It is modest and retiring, it lies in ambush, waits and waits."—*David Copperfield*—Miss Lavinia Spenlow.

May 23.—"Argeyment is a gift of Natur. If Natur has gifted a man with powers of argeyment, a man has a right to make the best of 'em, and he has not a right to stand on false delicacy, and deny that he is so gifted; for that is a turning of his back on Natur, a flouting of her, a slighting of her precious caskets, and a proving of one's self to be a swine that isn't worth her scattering pearls before."—*Barnaby Rudge*—John Willet.

May 24.—"It is a pleasant thing to reflect upon, and furnishes a complete answer to those who contend for the gradual degeneration of the human species, that every baby born into the world is a finer one than the last."—*Nicholas Nickleby.*

May 25.—"We never know the full value of blessings till we lose them."—*Diary.*

May 26.—"It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's."—*A Christmas Carol*—Scrooge.

May 27.—"It is an essential part of every national character to pique itself mightily upon its faults, and to deduce tokens of its virtue or its wisdom from their very exaggeration."—*American Notes.*

May 28.—"The children that we were are not lost to the great knowledge of our Creator. Those innocent creatures will appear with us before Him, and plead for us."—*The Wreck of the "Golden Mary."*

May 29.—"If there were no such thing as display in the world, my private opinion is . . . that we might get on a great deal better than we do, and might be infinitely more agreeable company than we are."—*The Battle of Life.*

May 30.—"Even the glare and glitter of a court, the splendour of a palace, and the pomp and glory of a throne, yield in their power of conferring happiness to domestic worth and virtue."—Conclusion to *Sketches of Young Couples.*

May 31.—"The drinking should have begun in sorrow, or poverty, or ignorance—the three things in which, in its awful aspect, it does begin."—Letter to John Forster (criticism of George Cruikshank's "Bottle").

DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS

May 1. Portsmouth Branch: Concert arranged by Miss Blackmore.
,, 3. Shrewsbury Branch: Closing Meeting of the Session.
,, 4. West London Branch: Conversazione at St. Stephen's Church House, Bloemfontein Road, Shepherd's Bush, W., at 8 p.m.
,, 6. Needlework and Charitable Guild: Social Gathering at St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane, E.C., at 7 p.m. Musical Programme and Dancing.
,, 6. Edinburgh Branch: Conversazione.
,, 10. Liverpool Branch: Monthly Meeting.
,, 10. Durban Pickwick Club: Musical and Literary Evening.
,, 12. Brixton Branch: Conversazione.
,, 13. Visit to Staple Inn. Conducted by Mr. T. Cato Worsfold.
,, 17. Durban Pickwick Club: Papers on "Wilkins Micawber," by Mr. S. Churchyard, and on "Tony Weller," by Mr. L. Eweling.
,, 17. Brighton Branch: Conversazione at Steine House.
,, 24. Needlework and Charitable Guild: Meeting at St. Bride's Institute, 7 p.m.
,, 31. Liverpool Branch: Meeting at Common Hall, Hackins Hey. Address by Dr. Edgar Brown.

PICKWICK PICKINGS.*

THIS little work will form an interesting addition to collections of Dickensiana or Pickwickiana, but it would be difficult to know on what other grounds to recommend it. It consists of a quotation from *Pickwick* for every day in the year. A *Pickwick* birthday-book would be interesting, but in this case the compiler does not seem to have exercised much ingenuity in selecting the quotations. In too many there is no "point."

* *Daily Pickings from Pickwick.* Compiled and arranged by Florence Dalgleish. London: John Long.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

LONDON

OUR closing meeting of the season—the third annual conversazione—which was held at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C., on April 5th, was a splendid success. The gathering numbered between 300 and 400, the musical programme was excellent, and everything went off as well as possible. The songs by Miss Cissie Rose, Mr. Richard Nitschke, and Mr. Howard Poole were delightfully rendered, and were thoroughly enjoyed. Mr. George Schneider pleased and amused the audience with a couple of humorous songs. Miss Margaret Gyde, A.R.A.M., played two pianoforte solos with all her admirable skill. Mr. John Tosceine gave a splendid recital of the story of "Richard Doubledick"; and Miss Jessie Pearse and Mr. Howard Rose both gained hearty applause for their recitals, "Sydney Carton" and "The Marchioness" respectively. Mr. Fred Courtenay admirably carried out the duties of accompanist. Mr. James E. Palmer was in the chair. During the evening Mr. Arthur Humphreys, Hon. Secretary of the Manchester branch, conveyed to the members present the good wishes of their Fellow-Dickensians in the North. Intervals were provided for refreshments.

NEEDLEWORK AND CHARITABLE GUILD

THE chief item of interest to record is the "Old Folks' Tea" given at Stamford Hill on the 29th April, which was a great success in every way. The old people were gathered from the surrounding neighbourhood irrespective of denomination. There was an abundant supply of good food provided, including beef, bread and butter, cake, and as much tea as was required. A paper bag was provided for each guest to take away what they were unable to eat, and many were so utilised. After tea the flowers which had decorated the tables were distributed among the guests, who then settled down to enjoy the entertainment provided, during which the men smoked cigarettes and tobacco supplied by some members of the council who were present as helpers.

Mr. Sidney Marriott acted as chairman; and amongst those who provided the entertainment were—Messrs. H. Rose, R. Allbut, B. W. Matz, G. Brown, G. Feistal, and Miss F. Nicholls. Miss Blake and Mr. H. V. Miniken acted as accompanists. The Rev. J. Lenthal Davids, Vicar of St. John's, who so generously placed the hall at the disposal of the Guild, addressed the guests, and called for a vote of thanks, which was heartily responded to.

Those old folk who were unable to attend through illness or other causes had their share of food sent to their homes, and all the men were presented by Miss Elliott with a packet of tobacco on leaving.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH

ABOUT one hundred and fifty members of the Sheffield branch assembled at the Cutlers' Hall on April 14th, and participated in a most enjoyable evening. Mr. R. W. Dodsworth presided. The Hon. Secretary, Mr. T. W. Padmore, gave a capital report of his visit to Chigwell and the Fellowship's headquarters. Recitals were given by Mr. C. R. Smith, "Lady Dedlock's visit to the Cemetery with Jo"; by Miss H. Roberts, "Belinda's Letter"; by Mr. T. W. Padmore, "Mr. Weller's visit to Brick Lane"; and by Miss Carr, "The Death of Sydney Carton." Mr. T. W. Padmore also gave a reading of "Bob Sawyer's Party."

ROCHESTER BRANCH

THE annual meeting of the above branch took place on April 20th at the Council Chamber of the Guildhall, under the presidency of the Deputy-Mayor (Alderman W. J. McLellan). The report read by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. E. F. Cobb, showed that the prosperity of the branch had been well maintained, and that there are now 134 members, nearly double the number on the books at the commencement of the session. Eighty trees had been planted on the road to Gadshill Place, at a cost of £31 15*s.* 6*d.* to the Dickens Memorial Tree Fund. Alderman McLellan was elected President of the branch in succession to the late Dean Hole. At the conclusion of the business portion of the proceedings Mr. J. W. T. Ley, Hon. General Secretary of the Fellowship, read a paper on "Dickens, the Glorified Reporter," which was exceedingly interesting. Mr. Ley referred to the "heretics" and "critics" of Dickens, and remarked that their attitude towards Dickens seemed to resemble that which the fox assumed towards the grapes. He then dealt at length with the criticisms of the novelist which had appeared during the recent discussion in the *Brighton Herald*. Giving way to none as a lover of Dickens, he admitted that the great novelist did lack powers of construction. He argued, too, that Dickens's humour was often farce and caricature, but submitted that farce and caricature were legitimate forms of art. He admitted that much of Dickens's pathos was unsuccessful, because of a palpable striving after effect, but pointed out that this arose from the very sincerity and earnestness of the author. And admitting all these things, he asked what it was that still made Dickens the world's most popular novelist, finding the answer, of course, in the fact that in all his books was to be found the noblest of all lessons nobly taught—"Love thy neighbour as thyself."

BIRMINGHAM AND DISTRICT BRANCH

MR. ROLLAND TAYLOR, a local enthusiast, gave an admirable rendering of "The Schoolboy's Story" on Friday, April 7th, and Miss Bocker, a reading of "The Boots at the 'Holly Tree.'" Owing to the absence of several speakers the discussion was somewhat short. Mr. S. B. Askew presided.

The Annual Social was held on Friday evening, April 8th, at 7.30 p.m., at Rodway's Restaurant, Horsefair. Mr. A. Capel Shaw (President), ably supported by Mrs. and Miss Shaw, received the guests, which included members and friends. The friends were requested to come wearing some device or token symbolic of a Dickensian title or character, and a prize was given to the best device. The scheme was most successful, and the ingenuity of the badges were admirable. The prizes were awarded to Mrs. Yoxall—who wore suspended by a ribbon a miniature loaf, a ginger-beer bottle, and a little Inn=*Eatanswill Independent*—and Mr. Martin, *Nicholas Nickleby* (Nickel ASS, Nickel BEE—a very good representation of the ass and bee in nickel). The programme also included music and refreshments; excellent songs were rendered by Miss Alice Low. The meeting ends the present session.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

AN appreciative audience attended the concluding meeting of the season of the above branch held on April 12th, the President of the branch, Dr. A. Graham, occupying the chair. The entertainment was of a high-class character, the musical portion being exceptionally good. Mr. J. R. Smith, in a short address, drew attention to the good work which had been accomplished through the writings of Dickens, and made mention of the many phases of his works. Reference was made to the efforts of Miss Moody (Hon. Secretary) in connection with the local branch, and a presentation of an *edition de luxe* of Langton's *Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens* was made to her by Mr. J. R. Smith, Vice-President.

FOREST GATE AND DISTRICT BRANCH

THE third and last meeting of the session of the above branch was held at the Forest Gate Public Hall, on Wednesday, April 19th, when the Hall was crowded to its utmost capacity to hear a selection of recitals from the works of Dickens, by Mr. John Toscenie.

The Chairman, in introducing Mr. Toscenie, paid a warm and glowing tribute to the power and influence of the master, assuring the audience that the pleasure they were looking forward to that evening was as nothing compared to the continual pleasure and profit they could derive from the reading of a chapter from any of his works to their families by their own fireside; and he rejoiced to think that Charles Dickens was a great moral teacher whose wholesome influence was counteracting in no small measure the evil effects that were wrought by the reading of so much cheap and trashy literature that unfortunately was so prevalent at the present day.

Mr. Toscenie met with a most flattering reception, and from beginning to end held the audience spell-bound. The following was the programme: "Our Next-Door Neighbours," "The Goblins who Stole a Sexton," "Boots at the Holly Tree Inn," "A Child's Dream of a Star," "Miggs and the 'Prentice Knight," and "Dr. Marigold."

Arrangements are already in hand for an outing to the Maypole at Chigwell, on Thursday, June 15th, when it is hoped that many Dickensians will join the Forest Gate branch on that day, further particulars of which will be announced in *Household Words*.

BRISTOL AND CLIFTON DICKENS SOCIETY (AFFILIATED)

THE Lesser Colston Hall was crowded on April 3rd, on the occasion of the annual musical and dramatic performance by the members of the Bristol and Clifton Dickens Society. The chief feature of the evening was a presentation of the famous "Bardell *v.* Pickwick Trial," from *Pickwick Papers*, but the "case" was preceded with a number of miscellaneous items. "Mr. Bumble's Courtship," from *Oliver Twist*, was recited in capital style by Mr. Theo. Jones. On the whole, "the trial" was very creditably produced. The costumes and the mannerisms of all "in court" were as realistic as the circumstances justified, or one could expect to witness. The characters were represented as follows:—Serjeant Buzfuz, Mr. G. Rennie Powell; Mr. Nathaniel Winkle, Mr. C. Andrews; Sam Weller, Mr. Fred Down; Serjeant Snubbins, Mr. S. Harvey; Mr. Skimpin and Mr. Phunky, Mr. Theo. Jones and Mr. W. H. Chidgey respectively; Mr. Justice Stareleigh; Mr. A. J. Tonkin; Miss Elizabeth Cluppins and Mrs. Susannah Sanders were respectively Mrs. A. J. Tonkin and Miss Bruford; Mrs. Bardell, Mr. S. Button; Mr. Pickwick, Mr. C. W. Birth; Mr. Tony Weller, Mr. F. J. Giddings; Mr. Perker, Mr. F. T. Tonkin; Foreman of the Jury, Mr. E. R. Wilkinson; the chemist, a juryman, Mr. G. F. Butler; and Master Tommy Bardell, Master A. G. W. Tonkin. During the interval the President of the Society, the Rev. A. N. Blatchford, made a few remarks, commending the object of the Society and of the entertainment, which was to provide funds for the "Guild of Poor Things."

HASTINGS AND ST. LEONARDS BRANCH

THE last meeting of the session took the form of a social gathering, held on 27th April at the Queen's Hotel, at which 150 members and friends were present. Mr. Harry Furniss, the President, presided, and delivered a spirited and interesting address. He dealt with the work the Fellowship was doing, and said it was what "Charles Dickens would have liked those who loved him to do, to do good to others."

An interesting programme was carried out, including very fine recitations by Miss Freda Allison, Dickens impersonations by Mr. Scotcher, an excellent little sketch by Mrs. A. Cruttenden, and a reading by Miss Elworthy.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

THE ante-penultimate concert took place on Monday, April 10th, at the Albert Hall. The progamme was arranged by Mrs. Bothwell Barron, and comprised some of the best professional and amateur talent in Portsmouth. It opened with a pianoforte solo, "Scotch Airs," by Mr. R. H. Turner, M.A., Madame Sara Anderson did justice to the expressive ballad by Barnby, "When the tide comes in," and her voice sweetly blended with that of her daughter in the duet, "The Land of Yesterday." Miss Violet Anderson also sang "Song of the Morning"; and Mrs. G. W. Allen's items—"Idle Words" and "The Kerry Dance"—met with prolonged applause. Messrs. Guard and Wassell took part in the well-known duet, "Love and War," and their solos met with much favour. Charming violin solos were given by Miss Winifred Gourd. The recitations by Mr. Washington Allen fairly brought down the house. The impersonation of the characters in the scene from *The School for Scandal* was particularly clever.

MANCHESTER BRANCH

THE annual meeting was held on Friday, April 7th, under the presidency of Mr. W. H. Vaughan, Chairman of the Council. The annual report, submitted by Mr. Arthur Humphreys, Hon. Secretary, showed that there had been an addition of thirty new members. Sir W. H. Bailey was re-elected President. The Vice-Presidents, Council, Hon. Secretary, and Hon. Treasurer were also re-appointed. Refreshments were served during the evening, and, after the formal business had been disposed of, an interesting programme of music and recitations was gone through. Mrs. Clay recited in excellent style, "Mr. Bumble's Courtship," and Mr. John Duxbury gave extracts from *The Chimes* and *The Bells*. He also contributed a delightful character sketch entitled "Old Farmer Grey." This meeting brought a very successful session to a close.

Mr. Duxbury, who is a member of this branch, is proceeding to the United States and Canada to give a series of elocutionary recitals during the early summer. We have no doubt he will be cordially welcomed by Dickensians on the other side of the Atlantic.

SHREWSBURY BRANCH

MR. FRANK SPEAIGHT appeared for the second time this season on the platform at the Working Men's Hall, Shrewsbury, on April 12th, and received a most enthusiastic welcome. The recital was under the patronage of the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Hearn, and the whole of the profits from this and the previous recital will be devoted towards supplying food and an outing for as many of the poorest children of the town as the funds will allow. Mr. Speaight found ample scope for his great elocutionary and dramatic powers in a recital, in six chapters, from *David Copperfield*. He also caused intense amusement by reciting, at the close of the evening, "Mr. Winkle's Misadventures at Bath," from the *Pickwick Papers*.

YORK BRANCH

THE members of the Priory Street Y.M.C. Choir on April 11th gave a concert in the Peckitt Street Schoolroom in aid of the funds of the above branch. Councillor T. Anderson occupied the chair. An interesting programme was submitted, including part-songs, solos, and recitations.

CHESTERFIELD BRANCH

ANOTHER branch is in course of formation at Chesterfield. Mrs. E. Barnes, Devonshire Villa, Avondale Road, Chesterfield, is actively interesting herself in the movement.

BLACKHEATH, LEE, AND LEWISHAM BRANCH

A DRAMATIC performance in aid of the funds of this branch was given on March 25th, in the Lewisham Parish Church Hall, under the direction of Mr. Alfred Hearne, when Merrivale and Grove's three-act play, *Forget-me-not*, was produced before a large and appreciative audience. Mr. John Duggan was stage-manager, and Miss May Cole a most efficient accompanist.

The annual conversazione which preceded the last of the monthly meetings held by this branch during the session, was held at the Obelisk Hall, Lewisham, on April 14th. The Mayor of Lewisham (Councillor T. White, J.P.) presided, and contributed a recitation. Vocal and instrumental music and recitals were also contributed by Mrs. Foster, Miss May Cole, Miss Frances Innocent, Miss Edith Sayers, Miss Dorothy Mace, Mr. Fred. Courtenay, Mr. W. Curd, Mr. W. V. Wheller, Mr. John Duggan, Mr. Alfred Hearne, Mr. Herbert Palmer, and Mr. James E. Palmer. Refreshments were served during the evening. Major E. F. Coates, M.P., J.P., has been elected President of the branch, in place of Alderman W. Brown, J.P., who is leaving the district for Brighton on account of ill-health.

EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT BRANCH

THE fortnightly meeting of the above branch was held on April 6th, Mr. O. W. Gunn, Vice-President, in the chair. Mr. O. Lindsay, having unavoidably to postpone his paper on "Jo" (*Bleak House*), the President, the Rev. James Stevenson, M.A., gave a lecture entitled "In Far Lochaber," in which he vividly described that wild, romantic, and lovely region. Selections of Jacobite and Highland music were given by Miss M. Young and Miss J. J. Stevenson.

At the meeting of the above branch held on Thursday evening, April 20th, at 5, St. Andrew's Square, a paper was read by Miss I. M. Pagan on "Thoughts on the Dramatic Element in Dickens." Owing to the Easter holidays the attendance of members was not so large as usual, but those who were present had the pleasure of listening to a most interesting and enjoyable paper. Miss Pagan, who has adapted many of the great novelist's novels for stage representation, gave a critical survey of those works in their relation to the stage, and their fitness for such adaptation.

BRIGHTON BRANCH

THERE was a good muster of members at the meeting of this branch on April 12th, at Steine House. Mr. W. Adams presided. Miss H. Lloyd opened with a song, and Mr. F. W. Parks followed with a reading from *Martin Chuzzlewit*, dealing with the dinner-party at Todger's. During the evening Mr. F. J. Gauntlett gave, in his finished style, "The Death of Dora," and that matchless scene from *Martin Chuzzlewit*, where Sairey Gamp and Betsey Prig fall out. The Rev. George Plumb appeared before the branch for the first time, and was highly successful with two readings, "Sam Weller's Valentine" and "Fagin in the Condemned Cell." Mr. G. H. Fowler assisted Miss Lloyd to diversify the programme with songs. The session will wind up with a conversazione at Steine House, on May 17th.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

A MEETING was held in the Common Hall, Hackins Hey, on March 29th, under the chairmanship of Mr. C. P. Mitchell, when a most absorbing and instructive lecture, illustrated by excellent ancient and modern limelight views, on "Shakespeare and his Times," was contributed by Mr. W. R. Yardley. The lecturer is an enthusiastic worshipper of the immortal bard, and discussed the Baconian theory with almost scornful impatience. An interesting discussion, contributed to by Messrs. Gordon, Brown, Jaggard, Wallace, and others, brought the proceedings to a close.

BRIXTON BRANCH

ON Thursday, April 13th, a sale of work took place at the Ladies' Parlour, Brixton Independent Church, under the auspices of the ladies of the Needlework Guild. The Rev. A. Thurston Pain opened the sale, making a few appropriate remarks relative to the benevolent work of the Fellowship. A busy time ensued in the disposal of stock-in-trade, useful and ornamental. Miss Annie Cooper presided at the piano, and several songs were admirably rendered during the evening by Miss Ettie Critchley, Miss Knight, Miss Coutts and sister, Miss M. Grinyer, and Mr. E. Tate. Excellent recitations were also given by Mr. H. Grinyer and Mr. J. Skeen.

WINNIPEG BRANCH

DURING the month of March two very interesting and instructive meetings were held. On the 14th members read papers on "Famous Characters from Dickens"; Mr. H. R. Eade, Miss Dent, Mr. Bagshawe, Mrs. King, Mr. J. F. Gascoigne, and Mr. Overett ably contributing. Characters from *Great Expectations*, *Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Barnaby Rudge* were dealt with, and graphic descriptions and opinions were given upon "Lovely Women of Dickens," Mr. Pickwick, and Sydney Carton.

On March 28th the Rev. S. G. Chambers favoured us with an extremely good lecture on "Dickens as a Reformer, Moral and Educational." The lecturer said that Dickens was a reformer of the quiet, yet powerful, kind. He did not set out to promulgate new principles, or spread abroad treatises and text-books. He showed up the moral and educational defects of his day in all their natural hideousness in order to arouse sympathy, which he certainly did, and thus laid the foundation sure and strong for a true reformation. Dickens's method was to attain the right by exposure of the wrong, and a creating of a sympathy in the hearts of men and women. It was a noble work, and was well done.

NEW YORK BRANCH

AT a public meeting held on April 1st a New York branch was successfully started. Forty members were enrolled, and it is confidently anticipated that this number will be increased to one hundred before the end of the month. The following officers were elected: Philip Verril Mighels, President; Emerson McMillin, Miss Jeanette L. Gilder, Frederick Taber Cooper, Miss Carolyn Wells, Champ S. Andrews, and Mrs. Clarence Burns, Vice-Presidents; Mrs. M. E. Ney, Secretary; and Miss Grace Furniss, Treasurer.

MANHATTAN (NEW YORK) BRANCH

THE first meeting of the Manhattan Branch was held on April 4th at the Hotel Astor. Mr. E. H. Crossby presided. The other speakers were Mr. C. F. Adams and Mr. C. A. Govan. Dr. L. G. Wilder, Mr. C. A. Govan, Mr. S. C. Coale, and Mr. C. F. Adams were elected members of a committee to draw up a constitution and suggest the names of persons suitable to hold office. The following officers were elected *pro tem.*: Mr. C. R. Keen, President; Mrs. C. O. H. Craigie, Secretary; and Mr. A. E. Squire, Treasurer. About one hundred persons were present.

WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND) BRANCH

A NEW branch of the Fellowship is being formed in Wellington (New Zealand), with Mr. Charles Wilson, the Government Library, Wellington, New Zealand, as Secretary.

TORONTO BRANCH

A MOVEMENT to form a second Canadian branch has commenced, with Mr. E. S. Williamson, 17, Maynard Avenue, Toronto, as Secretary.

A LANTERN LECTURE ON BOZ

A MOST informative and interesting lecture was given by Mr. J. H. K. Todd, a member of the Fellowship, at the Camera Club, on March 27th. Mr. Todd gave his discourse the title of "Charles Dickens," and dealt with the many phases of the life and works of the novelist and scenes in the novels. An additional attraction was given to the lecture by a number of most excellent lantern slides of portraits, houses, scenes, and other pictures. Mr. Arthur Broughton during the evening impersonated Dickens's characters.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH

BOOKS

Old Rochester, No. 18 (illustrated guide to Dickensian Rochester, with plan). By Edwin Harris. Illustrated. 16 pp. Rochester: E. Harris and Sons. One penny.

A Tale of Two Cities. In Nelson's Sixpenny Classics. Cloth. London Nelson and Sons.

NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES

"Dickens's Method of Characterisation." By E. M. Heagan. *Young Journalist and Author*, April.

"The Six most Popular Characters in Dickens." Competition. *Household Words*, April 1st, 7th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th.

"Charles Dickens." By J. W. T. Ley. *Household Words*, April 22nd.

"Autograph Hunter's Trick: Charles Dickens Hoodwinked." *Household Words*, April 22nd.

"The Cheeryble Brothers: A Notable Revenge." *Household Words*, April 15th.

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood." By George F. Gadd. Illustrated. *Manchester Quarterly*, April.

"Statuette of Charles Dickens." By Percy Fitzgerald. Illustration of. *Tatler*, April 19th.

"Hans Christian Andersen." By Arthur L. Salmon (with account of his visit to Dickens). *Great Thoughts*, April 8th.

References to same subject in *Evening News*, April 3rd; *Globe*, April 1st; *Academy*, April 1st.

"My Favourite Novel." By Albert W. Quill, M.A. (dealing chiefly with Dickens). *Dublin Daily Express*, April 7th.

The Lady Literary Society. Competition VI.: "Questions from Charles Dickens's Novels." *The Lady*, April 13th.

"The Great Shawkspear Mystery." By G. K. Chesterton (Dickens as a parallel). *Daily News*, April 15th.

"Dickens and Wilkie Collins." By Walter Jerrold. *Notes and Queries*, April 8th.

"Dickens's Fat Boy." *Manchester Guardian*, April 1st.

"Bumble as a Spendthrift." *Daily Mirror*, April 18th.

"The Sense of Humour." By R. Y. Tyrrell (in Dickens and others). *Academy*, April 15th.

"Gravestones in Cooling Churchyard." Illustrated in *Sphere*, April 29th.

PICTORIAL POST CARDS

The Last Letter of Charles Dickens, written to Charles Kent, Wednesday, 8th June, 1870. London: Matthews and Mullins.

Dickens Series. Quotations. Illustrated. Packet of six. London: Philco Publishing Co.

Mr. Bransby Williams, in characters from Dickens's novels. A series of twelve cards, 2*d.* each. London: Rapid Photo' Printing Co.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

BRANCHES AND WINTER PROGRAMMES

To the Editor of "The Dickensian"

DEAR SIR,—I was very pleased indeed to see a letter from our worthy Secretary in the February issue of the *Dickensian* soliciting information with regard to the working of the various branches of the Fellowship, and inviting suggestions for the future working of those branches.

It is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, for since we have formed "a common bond of friendship" having the same ideals and objects in view, nothing can be more interesting to all of us than a knowledge of how the branches of the Fellowship are conducted, and I sincerely trust that this good feeling will be continued and strengthened through the happy medium of the official organ of the Fellowship—the *Dickensian*.

As Mr. Yoxall truly says, concerning the working of our own particular branch, "the arrangement does not altogether meet the requirements of all our members." This, it must be distinctly understood, is due, not to any antagonistic spirit on the part of any particular member or members, but rather to the fact that some are of opinion that there is room for improvement in the working system upon which the branch is at present conducted. No doubt there are members of other branches who hold similar opinions, and it is with the object of encouraging a general discussion on any suggestions that may be brought forward by members that our Secretary has consulted the medium of the *Dickensian*.

In the first place, it appears to be generally admitted that twenty minutes (the allotted time, Rule iv.) is not reasonably sufficient for the reading of a paper. It does not allow for a proper sifting of a given subject, and often papers either appear disjointed or terminate abruptly, owing to a forced condensing put upon the lecturer. Could not this be remedied by extending the time from *twenty* to *forty* minutes for the reading of papers? To my mind it seems only reasonable and fair that sufficient time should be allowed those members who are willing to give the necessary time and pains to the preparations of papers, in order that they may be in a position to discourse somewhat thoroughly upon their chosen subjects.

Another question upon which there appears to be some diversity of opinion is whether or not there should be more than *one* paper for each meeting. In this connection I am of opinion that one is sufficient, and that if to the name of the lecturer of a given paper there be appended the name of a person who is willing to criticise that paper it would be most beneficial all round, for not only would the lecturer have sufficent time to discourse upon his subject, but criticism of the same would be ensured.

Further, it is thought that meeting only once a month is not frequent enough. On the one hand, those who are deeply interested in the Fellowship have an inclination for meeting either weekly or fortnightly, while, on the other hand, those who are not so particularly interested are apt to become indifferent as to whether or not they attend the monthly meetings. Under these circumstances would it not be well to adopt the suggestion, say, for a bi-weekly meeting? I cannot illustrate this point better than by stating that, owing to some unfortunate circumstance which presented itself at the last moment and over which we had no control, we were obliged to abandon altogether our birthday celebration, thus causing a lapse of two whole months between two meetings. Considering that there are only about eight meetings in all (two of which are generally social), it is obvious that such a lapse as that above mentioned is detrimental to the best interests of the Fellowship. I remain, sir, yours very faithfully,

HORACE E. MOORE.

138, CHURCH HILL ROAD, HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM,
25th April, 1905.

FROM A DRAWING BY W. BOUCHER WHICH APPEARED IN "JUDY," 22 JUNE, 1870